

VIRGINIA
STANDARDS OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

Spring 2002 Released Test

GRADE 8
ENGLISH: WRITING

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DIRECTIONS

Read the passage in each shaded box. Read each question after the passage. Choose the best answer. Then mark the space in the answer booklet for the answer you have chosen.

SAMPLE A

A Special Person

In English class, Sarah has been asked to write a description of someone special to her. Sarah wants to write about her older brother.

Which of these would *best* help Sarah write her description of her older brother?

- A Calling his friends and telling them about him
- B Thinking about all the things she likes about him
- C Making a list of things she wants him to do for her
- D Asking him to take her to the library

SAMPLE B

Here is the first part of Sarah's rough draft.

(1)A special person in my life is my big brother, his name is Ben. (2)He is tall and thin.

How should sentence 1 be written?

- F A special person in my life is Ben, my big brother.
- G A special person in my life is Ben, he is my big brother.
- H In my life a special person is my big brother, his name is Ben.
- J My big brother Ben, he is a special person in my life.

SAMPLE C

Here is the next part of Sarah's rough draft.

(3)He helps me with my homework.
(4)He is a good student.

In sentence 3, He helps should be written —

- A He were helping
- B He have helped
- C He help
- D as it is

Violets

Arlene's English teacher has asked the students to write a short research paper on a topic of their choice.

- 1 Arlene learned that violets were used to make a special perfume for an empress from France. She decided to write about this topic. Which of these would *best* help her before she starts her research?
- A Writing a rough draft of her paper
 - B Listing questions about her topic
 - C Asking her teacher if she likes violets
 - D Rereading papers she has written in the past

- 2 Which of these books would probably provide Arlene with the *most* useful information?
- F *How to Grow Healthy African Violets and Care for Them Too*
 - G *The Language of Flowers*
 - H *Flowers and the Perfumes They Have Produced*
 - J *Life in France Under King Louis XIV*

Here is the first part of Arlene’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 3–5.

(1)Go for a walk in the woods in early spring, and chances are, if you look carefully, you will find some violets. (2)Violets were the favorite flower of an empress, inspired a perfume that still exists today, and made the town of Parma, Italy, a popular tourist destination. (3)Even today, flower lovers flock to Parma each February and March to see violets take over the parks and gardens.

(4)The citizens of Parma developed a passion for violets that began with Empress Marie Louise. (5)She was the second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, she became the duchess of Parma in 1816 after her husband’s exile. (6)Even before she arrived in Italy, she wrote to her lady-in-waiting. (7)She asked for violets and instructions on planting and caring for them. (8)Once settled at her palace, Empress Marie Louise cultivated the flower in the royal gardens. (9)Therefore, she did much more than that.

3 In sentence 3, how can violets be written *more* descriptively?

- A some attractive flowers
- B a fragrant carpet of purple
- C nice-smelling wildflowers
- D tons of purple

4 How is sentence 5 *best* written?

- F She was the second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte and became the duchess of Parma in 1816 after her husband's exile.
- G She was the second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte she became the duchess of Parma in 1816 after her husband's exile.
- H She was the second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, became the duchess of Parma in 1816 after her husband's exile.
- J She was the second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte and she became the duchess of Parma in 1816. After her husband's exile.

5 In sentence 9, Therefore, does not correctly link ideas. Which of these should be used instead?

- A However,
- B In spite of it all,
- C Secondly,
- D For example,

Read this next section of Arlene’s rough draft and use it to answer questions 6–10. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

(10)“Maria Luigia,” as the duchess was called by her people loved violets so much that she constantly wore purple gowns and corsages made from real or handmade violets. (11)She made purple the color of her many servants’ uniforms. (12)She also painted violets and had it carved on her picture frames and fans. (13)Sometimes she used a tiny painted violet in place of her signature. (14)As a crowning touch, the duchess went to some monks in Parma who were known for their skill with plants and asked them to create a special violet perfume just for her.

(15)After much patient research, the monks seceded in reproducing the flowers’ delightful scent. (16)But they kept the formula a strict secret. (17)Then, in 1870, a local barber asked the monks to reveal the ingredients so the perfume could be shared with a wider audience. (18)They did so, and today, anyone who had looked for a bit of springtime can purchase a bottle of “Violetta di Parma,” as the perfume is called, and wear the scent of a former member of French royalty.

6 In sentence 10, how is people loved violets correctly written?

- F people, love violets
- G people, loved violets
- H people loves violets
- J As it is

7 In sentence 12, how is had it carved correctly written?

- A have it carve
- B has it carved
- C had them carved
- D As it is

8 In sentence 15, how is the monks seceded correctly written?

- F** the monks' succeeded
- G** the monks succeeded
- H** the monks suceeded
- J** As it is

9 In sentence 15, how is flowers' delightful scent. correctly written?

- A** flowers' delightfull scent.
- B** flowers' delightful sent.
- C** flowers delightful scent.
- D** As it is

10 In sentence 18, how is anyone who had looked correctly written?

- F** anyone who was looking
- G** any one who looked
- H** anyone who is looking
- J** As it is

Art on Display

Ms. Eldridge, the principal at Upshaw Middle School, has asked Kevin to form a committee that will be responsible for displaying student artwork in the entry hall of the school. Kevin wants to write a letter that will persuade other students to join this committee.

- 11 Kevin is not sure what he wants to say in his letter. Which one of these would *best* help him think of ideas?
- A Drawing a sketch of the entry hall
 - B Making notes about the committee's responsibilities
 - C Looking in the school directory for potential committee members
 - D Asking his English teacher for tips on writing letters

Below are two drafts of the first part of Kevin’s letter. Use both drafts to answer questions 12–15.

DRAFT A

Dear Fellow Students,

You may be wondering how you can get involved at Upshaw Middle School this year. I’m sure many of you want to volunteer your time to make this year successful. I hope that you will consider my invitation to join the Upshaw Display Committee. It is the job of the committee to create displays for the school. By working on the committee, you can have fun and help others at the same time.

We will use the two display cases in the entry hall. We will use these display areas for paintings, drawings, and small sculptures. We may also want to use each corner to display larger sculptures. We will also display banners to announce the school’s events and accomplishments.

Each month committee members will ask a student to submit artwork for the display. First, we’ll select the artwork for the display and take down the previous month’s display. Then we will arrange the new pieces in their places. Then we’ll plan where the artwork should be placed and create nametags for each one.

DRAFT B

Dear Fellow Students,

Ms. Eldridge, the principal here at Upshaw Middle School, has asked me to form a committee to be in charge of displays for the entry hall. Each month students will submit artwork for the display. The Upshaw Display Committee members will select and display the artwork. The display will be the first thing that visitors will see when they enter the building. Our visitors will be able to see just how talented our students are!

As you know, there are two display cases in the entry hall. The one on the north wall could hold drawings and paintings. The case on the facing wall has shelves that could hold small sculptures. Each case can be locked for security. In addition, there is room in each corner for larger sculptures. Ms. Eldridge has also given us permission to display banners across the doorway to announce the school's events and accomplishments.

You may be wondering what you would do if you serve on this committee. Each month students will submit their artwork for the display. The committee will select the artwork from these submissions. After we take down the previous month's display, we will plan where the new artwork should be placed. We will arrange the new pieces in their places. Of course, we'll also create nametags for each one.

12 The main difference between paragraph 1 of Draft A and paragraph 1 of Draft B is —

- F** paragraph 1 of Draft A tells a story to capture the audience’s attention
- G** paragraph 1 of Draft B uses a number of technical terms
- H** paragraph 1 of Draft A elaborates on the idea of creating displays for the school
- J** paragraph 1 of Draft B has more specific information about what the committee will do

13 Paragraph 2 of Draft B contains information that does *not* appear in paragraph 2 of Draft A. This information —

- A** gives more details about how the artwork will be displayed
- B** introduces the main idea of the letter
- C** repeats ideas that are written in the first and third paragraphs
- D** explains how the reader can join the committee

14 Which paragraph should be rewritten to add more variety to the sentence beginnings?

- F** Paragraph 1 of Draft A
- G** Paragraph 2 of Draft A
- H** Paragraph 1 of Draft B
- J** Paragraph 2 of Draft B

15 Which of these could *best* be added at the end of paragraph 3 in either draft?

- A** Each tag will have a brief description of the student artist and the title of the artwork.
- B** Each committee member will need to fill out a form at the end of the year.
- C** Last year the committee was given an award by the PTA.
- D** Students who have practices after school may not be able to participate.

Read this next section of Kevin’s rough draft and answer questions 16–20. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

I have scheduled a meeting for next Thursday. If you are interested in serving on this committee, come to the gym after school. We will plan the work and think of a title for our exhibition hall. After the meeting, we will tell Ms. Eldridge about her plans. Then we can start selecting artwork!

If you would like to help make the entry hall a welcoming environment, please plan to attend the meeting. If you are too busy with other activities, please let me know if you have artwork to display. The committee will need the artwork for the first months’ display in two weeks. Ask Jan Alexander or me for information. We are usually outside the Social studies classroom before school.

I hope youll come. We’re going to have lots of fun while helping our school.

Sincerely,

Kevin Daniels

Kevin Daniels

16 How is interested in serving correctly written?

- F intrested in serving
- G interested in serveing
- H intristed in serving
- J As it is

17 How is her plans correctly written?

- A their plans
- B our plans
- C you’re plans
- D As it is

18 How is the first months' display correctly written?

- F** the first month's display
- G** the first months display
- H** the first months's display
- J** As it is

19 How is Social studies classroom correctly written?

- A** Social Study's classroom
- B** social studies classroom
- C** Social Studies Classroom
- D** As it is

20 How is youll come. We're going correctly written?

- F** you'll come, we're going
- G** you'll come. We're going
- H** you'll come. Were going
- J** As it is

Grade 8 English: Writing

Direct Writing Component

In the direct writing component, students write a composition about a topic presented to them in a writing prompt. The writing prompt page also includes a “Checklist for Writers” that lists points for students to keep in mind as they write. Writing compositions are scored in each of the domains:

- Composing
- Written Expression
- Usage/Mechanics

Scores in the Composing and Written Expression domains are reported as part of the Reporting Category called **Plan, Compose, and Revise Writing in a Variety of Forms for a Variety of Purposes**. Scores in the Usage/Mechanics domains are reported as part of the Reporting Category called **Edit for Correct Use of Language, Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling**. A writing prompt from the Spring 2002 administration is on the following page.

ENGLISH: WRITING

PROMPT No. 881

Imagine that your school will soon be adding something new. What do you think should be added? It may be a new club, or a new class that you would like to take. It might be before school, during school, or after school. Write to convince your principal that your idea is the one that should be added. Be sure to be specific and explain your reasons.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

- _____ I planned my paper before writing it.
- _____ I revised my paper to be sure that
 - _____ the introduction captures the reader's attention;
 - _____ the central idea is supported with specific information and examples that will be interesting to the reader;
 - _____ the content relates to my central idea;
 - _____ ideas are organized in a logical manner;
 - _____ my sentences are varied in length;
 - _____ my sentences are varied in the way that they begin; and
 - _____ the conclusion brings my ideas together.
- _____ I edited my paper to be sure that
 - _____ correct grammar is used;
 - _____ words are capitalized when appropriate;
 - _____ sentences are punctuated correctly;
 - _____ words are spelled correctly; and
 - _____ paragraphs are clearly indicated.
- _____ I checked my paper.

Answer Key

Test Sequence	Correct Answer	Reporting Category	Reporting Category Description
1	B	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
2	H	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
3	B	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
4	F	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
5	A	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
6	G	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
7	C	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
8	G	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
9	D	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
10	H	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
11	B	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
12	J	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
13	A	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
14	G	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
15	A	003	Plan, compose, and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes.
16	J	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
17	B	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
18	F	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
19	B	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
20	G	004	Edit for correct use of language, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.